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ABSTRACT

The study reported in this document canvassed the views of part-time Scottish community education workers, their employers, and their trainers about training needs and how adequately those needs were being met. Of primary concern to the study were the characteristics and roles of part-time staff, the level of satisfaction with existing training, and attitudes toward a modular training system. A total of 33 interviewees consisting of urban and rural social workers, community center staff, welfare rights workers, counselors, and tenants' group staff participated in the study. The study found that training and refresher courses were valued, but that there were some worries about training standards and delivery. Part-timer training was considered successful when it involved practical activities relevant to the work places and when the work was performed alongside experienced staff. Brief on-the-job training sessions were favored. Main problems limiting training opportunities were seen to be a lack of full-time staff and inadequate budgets, especially for special project workers and workers with preschool groups. Most part-time staff favored modules, but employers and trainers were doubtful. The document recommends that organizations more clearly identify goals and needs, and make training as relevant to needs as possible. On-the-job training is perceived as highly effective and desirable by part-time workers. Questions of policy, information, support services, and clearly the use of modules are discussed. (TES)

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Part Time Community Development Workers and Training:

A Study of Needs and Provision

Pamela Munn

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Daphne Hamilton

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Part-time staff make up the bulk of staff in the community education service, yet little is known about their training needs and the adequacy of current training provision. This report is one of a series focussing on youth work, adult education and community development. Staff working in the voluntary and local government sectors were interviewed about training needs and provision and a nationwide survey of provision was undertaken. We also report views on modular training. Each report begins with a summary of main findings and some key questions for those involved in training.

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Preface

This is one of three reports arising from research on the training needs of part-time community education workers. The focus of this report is on community development workers. Companion reports on youth workers and workers in adult education are also available. The research was commissioned by the Scottish Education Department (SED) and had three main strands. The first strand involved researching the views of part-time staff, their employers and their trainers about training needs and about how adequately these needs were being met (the work reported here). Inevitably there have been changes in training provision since our information was collected and the picture presented here is a snapshot of perceptions of training in 1988. Inevitably there have been changes in training provision since our information was collected and the picture presented here is a snapshot of perceptions of training in 1988. The second strand concerned the development of a small number of training modules, based on identified needs. The third strand consisted of an evaluation of these modules in operation.

The work reported here would not have been possible without the help and support of a great many people. We are grateful to all those who spared time to be interviewed and to those who so thoroughly collected information for us about their training provision. The report has had the benefit of the constructive criticism of the research project's advisory committee and of Lyn Tett and Fiona O'Kane at the Scottish Community Education Council with whom we are collaborating in the research. We are grateful for their support and encouragement. Mavis Gutu typed successive drafts quickly and efficiently. Despite all these contributions to the work we should make it clear that sins of omission or of commission rest with the authors. The views reported here are not necessarily those of either the SED or of the Scottish Council for Research in Education.

Summary of main findings

A brief summary is provided as a handy reference tool and as a guide to the main body of the report. Details of research design and method are contained in Chapter 1. It is important to refer to this chapter to understand the claims about generalisability of the findings.

Basic Training	There is a consensus across the voluntary and local authority sectors about the need for and content of basic training.	Chapter 2
Quality of Basic Training	Relevant training pitched at the appropriate level is valued. There were some worries about standards and delivery.	Chapter 3
Beyond Basic Training	There is a consensus about the need for refresher courses. Beyond this a variety of training needs are identified.	Chapter 2
Community Development	Part-timers are not always aware of the aims and purposes of community development.	Chapter 2
Successful Methods	Training was perceived as successful when it involved practical activities relevant to the contexts in which the part-timer operated. Trainers had to be credible and preferably possess direct experience of the trainees work.	Chapter 2
Successful Forms of Training	Training should be concentrated into as short a time as possible. On the job training and day release are preferred to longer periods of training. Weekend courses also have particular benefits.	Chapter 2
On-the-Job Training	Working alongside experienced staff was highly valued. We cannot over-emphasise the demand for on-the-job support and evaluation of work. Such support was reported as being more in evidence in voluntary sector advice organisations than in local authority and urban aid projects.	Chapter 2
Training Provision	Most of the training needs identified were catered for in national terms. Access to particular courses could be difficult. The main problems were lack of full-time staff and adequate budgets to provide courses.	Chapter 3
Lack of Training	Special project workers and workers with preschool groups enjoyed fewer training opportunities than advice and community programme workers. Committee members may lack training in committee and administrative procedures.	Chapters 2 and 3

Attitudes towards modules	Most part-time staff seem to be in favour of modules. Employers and trainers are less sure.	Chapter 3
Need for greater clarity of purposes in the local authority sector	Welfare rights organisations seemed to have a clear view of their aims and objectives. Training was organised to meet these. Special project workers and members of some committees seem less clear and this does not help in identifying training needs.	Chapter 3

Key Points for Consideration by Trainers

While we are not in a position to make recommendations for future training provision, we felt that it was worth drawing the attention of providers of training to the following key findings from our research.

Clarity of Purpose
Training needs are more easily identified within organisations with clearly defined aims. As mentioned above, there were significant differences between the organisations included in our sample in this respect.

Are your organisation's overall aims clearly defined? Is the relationship between training and the organisation's aims explicit?

Community Development Approach
There appears to be a lack of understanding of the way in which community development seeks to increase local control.

Are full and part-time paid and volunteer staff aware of the aims of community development? Are they trained to take control of local organisations?

Relevance
Training has to be practical and relevant to be perceived as successful.

Does your training develop the skills staff require to carry out their jobs effectively? Are they given the opportunity to practice their skills as part of their training? Are staff consulted about their training needs?

On-the-job training
On-the-job training is perceived as highly effective and desirable by part-time workers.

Are new part-time workers given the opportunity to work alongside experienced colleagues? If not, why?

Previous experience
All part-timers require appropriate training regardless of previous work experience. Trainers should not assume that teachers or social workers are adequately trained because of their employment backgrounds.

Do you make any assumptions about the suitability of part-timers previous training for their community education activities?

Trainer credibility
Trainers with recent experience in the field, or who are also practitioners are regarded as the most credibile. Being an effective practitioner is not in itself enough to guarantee being an effective trainer.

Are the trainers trained? Is their effectiveness assessed?

Modules
If training is developed using a modular approach, information and marketing are priorities.

Are you aware of the modular approach? Do you feel that modules could address your training needs? Does your staff know about modules?

Payment
The issue of payment for training must be addressed.

Are part-time staff expected to undertake training in their own time? What alternatives are there?

Planning and provision
The existence of a designated 'lead person' responsible for training and readily accessible information about training provision and take-up in the local authority sector would greatly facilitate strategic planning.

How is training policy formulated? What information and support services are available to policy makers? Who is responsible for implementing training policy?

Background

Introduction

In 1987 research on the training needs of part-time community education workers was commissioned. Why was research necessary? We have no wish to chart the history of the emergence of training in community education as a matter of concern. Suffice it to say that a series of reports, including two government reports, the Alexander Report (1975), the Carnegy Report (1977) and a report by the Scottish Community Education Council, Training for Change (1984) had stressed the need to review the training needs and training provision for community education workers. The focus on part-time staff was seen as particularly important since they represent the largest part of the work force. Indeed, reliable figures for the size of this work force have been difficult to come by. An indication of the size is that there are over 50,000 volunteers within youth organisations, the community education services have more than 20,000 voluntary or part-time staff and adult basic education has approximately 4,000 tutors employed as volunteers or part-time staff members. Clearly the quality of the contribution of such staff is important.

In dealing with such large numbers, employed by a range of organisations, targeted at different sections of the population, we had to be clear about:

- the focus of the research;
- how we were to collect information.

These details provide the information needed to put our chapters on research findings in context. It is important to stress right from the beginning, that we are **not** claiming that our findings are generalisable to all part-time workers in Scotland.

The focus of the research

The general focus of the research was on the training needs of part-time staff and on how adequately these needs were being met. However, we needed to develop a more specific focus in order to be clear about the kinds of information which would be most useful in identifying needs and in making sense of perceptions of the adequacy of training. Accordingly, we developed the focus of the research as being:

- the essential characteristics of the roles of part-time staff;
- the kinds of training necessary to support staff in these roles;
- the satisfaction and dissatisfaction with existing training;
- the factors which determine whether provision is satisfactory;
- attitudes towards a modular system of training.

In seeking information about these matters we talked to part-time workers, their immediate employers and those involved in training. It was not always possible to distinguish clearly among

these groups. Immediate employers, for example, were often involved in providing training as were part-timers themselves. Details of those interviewed are given in Table 1.2. First of all, we describe how we chose those to be interviewed.

How did we collect information?

It was clearly impossible to collect information from all those concerned with community development in Scotland. In selecting a sample we chose three areas which provided the possibility of contrasting perspectives on training needs and provision:

- an inner city area;
- a rural area;
- a mixed area of large towns with a rural hinterland.

Even within these areas, however, it was not possible to collect information from all those working in this field. We therefore divided community development into two categories:

- local authority sector;
- voluntary sector.

In each sector we interviewed a sample of:

- part-time community development workers;
- their immediate employers;
- their trainers.

Community development

The boundaries between the local authority and voluntary sector are not always as clear cut as in adult education and youth work because of the nature of community development, which seeks to stimulate individuals to act together in order to influence the social, economic and political issues affecting their lives. While the ultimate goal is to increase participatory democracy, immediate aims are concerned with solving social and economic problems at a local level. To this end, community development workers encourage and support the establishment of self-help groups managed by committees that may control or assert influence on local authority departments or provide services within the community. Thus, for example, tenants' associations are founded to provide a forum for voicing tenants concerns and complaints and to act as a pressure group on housing departments. Likewise, community centre committees are established to allow local people a measure of control over their centre's educational and recreational activities. The welfare rights and advice organisations included in our sample, on the other hand, were autonomous organisations and not supported by local authority staff.

In order to identify whether there are different training needs among voluntary groups within the community education service, such as centre councils, and those with a slightly more distant relationship, such as residents' associations, we have oversimplified the differences between the groups and categorised them as voluntary or local authority sector. In deciding whom to interview we took the advice of the Community Education Department in the particular area. The main

criterion for inclusion in the sample was that of salience of provision. In other words we chose those catering for the largest numbers of individuals in each area. Table 1.1 gives details of the organisations involved in the research.

Table 1.1: Organisations involved in the research

	Inner City	Rural	Mixed
Local Authority	Community Councils	Social Work Department	Project for the unemployed
	Community Centre	Community Centre	Community Centre Elderly Forum
Voluntary	Welfare Rights Housing Association Tenants' Association Playgroup Unemployed project	Advice Organisation	Welfare Rights Association YWCA Residents' Association

A total of 33 interviews were held across three areas. Details of these are given in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Total numbers interviewed

	Part-Time Workers	Employers/Trainers	Total
Local Authority	8	5	13
Voluntary Sector	12	8	20
Totals	20	13	33

As we mentioned above the distinctions between employers, trainers and part-timers were not always clear cut. Indeed, we have grouped employers and trainers together as a category because in the overwhelming majority of cases employers were involved in training at some level. Table 1.3 shows the numbers interviewed by case-study area.

Table 1.3: Numbers interviewed by case-study area

	Local Sector		Voluntary Sector	
	Part-timers	Employers/Trainers	Part-timers	Employers/Trainers
Inner City	2	1	5	3
Rural	1	1	2	1
Mixed	5	3	5	4
Totals	8	5	12	8

All the interviews were tape-recorded and lasted on average around 45 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured. Questions covering each of the topics of the research were devised and a series of probes for each topic developed. However, there was no fixed order for asking the questions and no set way of moving from one topic to another. Instead, the interviewer was responsive to the points being made by the respondent and used these to move from one topic to another. Respondents were invited to discuss any other points about training not previously covered in the interview and a content analysis of all the interviews was undertaken.

Are the findings generalisable?

It would be clearly inappropriate to suggest that the findings from the small numbers interviewed in the case-studies are generalisable to all part-time community development workers in Scotland. However, the advantage of the in-depth interview is that it allows the flavour of their concerns to emerge. This permits the reader to judge whether the kinds of concerns being expressed by our sample strikes chords with their own situation. Furthermore, the emergence of similarities of concerns of community development workers in different parts of the country and working in very different circumstances, encourage the view that we are not reporting the idiosyncratic opinions of a small number of workers. Indeed, the insights provided by intensive interviewing are preferable to the necessary limited information provided by large-scale surveys. While views on training needs and the adequacy of current provision are bound to vary according to local circumstance, we hope those most actively involved in community development will be encouraged to reconsider their own policy and practice in the light of the broad thrust of the views reported.

We have also undertaken a national survey of training provision and this does allow us to present a snapshot of the range and content of courses across the country. This could only provide a flavour of the national picture as it was difficult to collect up-to-date and accurate information and the resources of the project did not allow the data to be cross-checked.

We begin by reporting our case-study data and considering the variety of roles which part-time community development tutors play.

2

Training needs

In this chapter we concentrate on the training needs of part-timers in community development as seen by themselves and their employers/trainers. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to consider the range of roles which part-timers are seen as playing, the activities in which they are engaged and their employment experience. The identification of these helps to put comments about training needs in context.

It is also necessary, briefly, to describe the different groups of workers included in our survey in order to understand the terms used to describe their roles. We have identified the following categories:

Advice Workers

Advice workers provide information on a range of subjects, but the emphasis of their work tends to be on welfare rights and benefits. Of the two advice organisations included in the project, one was staffed almost entirely by volunteers and the other by community programme workers.

Community Centre Staff

Part-time paid and volunteer staff undertake a number of different jobs in community centres including reception duties, running coffee bars, supervising activities and generally assisting full-time staff.

Committee Members

All the projects included in our survey were managed by members of voluntary committees, recruited from the interest groups which they served or, in the case of the advice groups, from the volunteer workers. Members of these local committees may also serve on the committees of national or regional umbrella organisations.

Community Programme Workers

Recruited from the ranks of the long-term unemployed as part of the job creation programme, these individuals worked on projects sponsored by local authorities and voluntary bodies. The terms of the community programme stipulated a specific period of off-the-job training intended to improve the workers' employment prospects. Our survey included two such projects: one, in the rural area, sponsored by a voluntary advice organisation; another, in the mixed area, was sponsored by the local authority but the workers were actually assigned to work in different voluntary organisations. Early in 1989 the Community Programme was replaced by Employment Training, the terms of which are unattractive to many voluntary organisations.

Special Project Workers

These workers are generally employed on a temporary or sessional basis to carry out particular projects set up in response to local crises such as a sudden rise in unemployment, or to tackle particular problems considered a priority by the authorities and eligible for urban aid funding. Their work is very similar to that of outreach workers in adult education and employers prefer them to have experience in community education.

Roles of part-timers in community development

The first point to make is that the part-timers see themselves and are seen by others as playing a range of roles. They did not always define or label their roles but for the sake of clarity we have identified the categories listed in Table 2.1 based on the way in which they described how they carried out their responsibilities and the qualities they believed were required.

Table 2.1: Roles of part-time staff

• Activist/Campaigner	• Group Worker
• Adviser	• Information Gatherer (for a booklet)
• Administrator	• Organiser/Manager
• Chairperson	• Supervisor
• Counsellor	• Support Person
• Facilitator	• Teacher/Tutor
• Finance Controller	• Volunteer Trainer

Obviously the different contexts of their work affected the way in which individuals described their roles and what the terms used actually meant. Thus individuals working in welfare rights organisations saw themselves as advisers and/or counsellors. To some, the term adviser merely refers to the provision of information, while to others it might include an element of counselling which emphasises listening skills and the ability to explore issues with clients in order assess possible courses of action without offering advice or solutions. The term facilitator tends to be used rather loosely and its meaning varies according to context. An Elderly Forum worker, for example, saw his role as facilitating access to the centre where he worked by encouraging local people to join in the activities as well as facilitating the development of skills. An extension of this role was to act as a 'support person' in a specific way:

> A facilitator among groups was clearly something that they need which I recognised because of my visits to other projects - they need support, I need to be a support person.

A worker with a women's group, emphasised drawing out and assisting the development of skills among the members of the group with whom she worked. Although she also saw herself as

a teacher the didactic role was rejected and she acted as a 'figurehead' chairing, but not necessarily leading, discussions. This view coincides with those of adult education workers involved in outreach and basic education, described in our companion report, who saw themselves both as group workers and facilitators. A coffee bar assistant also described herself as a facilitator but here the stress was on welcoming and looking after centre users.

Most of the other terms used are self-explanatory but again may have varying shades of meaning according to context. The term administrator rather than manager or organiser was used when the job required a lot of paperwork.

A comparison of the roles mentioned by those in the voluntary sector would not be meaningful given the blurred distinctions between the groups. Not surprisingly, acting as an organiser/manager or adviser featured strongly in the voluntary sector where we interviewed members of voluntary committees and advice organisations. Within the local government sector there were more special project workers developing community groups who acted as facilitators, as well as committee members with similar roles to their counterparts in the voluntary sector.

More interesting insights and patterns emerged when we looked at how and why people became involved in community development work. A significant number had first made contact with community development groups through using the services they provided. For instance, some advice workers first made contact with their organisations through consulting them about welfare benefits. Involvement in one aspect frequently led to involvement in others. Thus a member of a management committee of a community centre might well be asked to join a community council. Others might become members of advisory groups through using an unemployed centre, or be invited along by a friend already involved in the work. Apart from a few professional community development workers, the majority belonged to groups operating in the areas in which they lived and were generally dealing with issues that directly concerned themselves, their families, friends and neighbours. Their main motivation, therefore, was the desire to help others sharing common problems and interests.

It is also important to take the respondents' employment experience into account for two main reasons. First of all employers frequently seek workers with experience in related fields. Secondly, it illustrates the diversity among community workers and the strengths and weaknesses they bring to this area of work which have implications for their training needs. The majority were female, many with dependent children and only a few were in paid employment outwith their community development activities. Table 2.2 gives details of the employment background of the respondents. For instance, special project workers, who emphasised managerial tasks, may only have to negotiate, develop and review programmes in a learning or special interest. They would thus work within a more focused framework than that of members of committtees involved in a range of activities and who have to work as a group.

Table 2.2: Former or main jobs of part-time staff

• adult education tutor*	• policeman
• butcher	• shop assistant
• careers adviser	• social security employee
• civil servant	• teacher
• community education trainer	• trade unionist
• community education worker*	• typist
• lollipop person	• unemployed volunteer
• mother	• youth worker
• pensioner	

* recruited specifically because of this experience

There was a wide diversity in the kinds of settings in which these workers were operating and the activities in which they were engaged as community development workers. The majority were based in community centres, shops, or flats but could spend a considerable amount of their working hours in other locations or, in a couple of cases, work from home. In addition to the differences in physical environment, there were also differences in the amount of support, in the shape of direct help from colleagues or full-time workers on which staff could call. Volunteers tended to work alongside one or more colleagues while paid part-time local government workers were more likely to work single-handed. Table 2.3 lists the activities in which the part-time workers were engaged.

Table 2.3: Community development activities undertaken by part-time staff

• community care	• single parents' group
• community centre committee	• tenants' association
• community council	• under-fives' group
• community shop	• welfare rights association
• community transport	• women's group
• residents' association	• work with elderly
• neighbourhood association	• work with the unemployed

In sum therefore, the picture reflects a certain amount of diversity in terms of:

- roles played by part-time staff;
- community development activities;
- employment backgrounds;
- access to immediate colleagues.

Despite the complexity of community development provision, distinct patterns of training needs were revealed. We consider these below.

The content of training

In this section we focus on the content of training. We concentrate on similarities between the voluntary and local government sectors and between employers' and part-time staff's views. Where there are clear differences of emphasis or opinion between the groups we draw attention to them. Before reporting on the needs identified by our sample, it is necessary, briefly, to describe the training provided in both the local authority and voluntary sectors.

The availability and forms of training varied greatly across and within the sectors. Voluntary advisory organisations and community projects tended to have formal structured training programmes while few of the committee members of residents' or tenants' associations, community councils or centre councils had undergone any training. Likewise, mainstream workers employed by community education reported that they had received little or no training.

The Need for Induction

Respondents from all areas identified a need for induction and basic training. While the boundaries between the two are not always clear, we thought it would be helpful to distinguish between becoming familiar with the setting in which one is operating, ie what we have called induction, and the development of key basic skills necessary to perform the job of part-time community development worker. The precise content of induction training and how long it should last varied according to the particular settings in which part-timers were working. However, there was sufficient similarity amongst their views of what should be included to produce the list contained in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Content for induction

- introduction to key personnel (eg other part-timers; first-line help; centre/office staff)
- job remit - what is being expected of the part-timer
- the resources/equipment readily available
- the overall aims of the organisation
- the training opportunities available

The amount of time to be spent on any of these activities clearly depends on the context in which community development work is being undertaken and the employee's previous experience. Members of community centre management committees, for instance, have usually been active users of the facilities and would therefore be well-acquainted with the setting and personnel. Paid employees recruited through the community programme, on the other hand, might be completely unfamiliar with many aspects of the job and the overall aims of the project.

There were striking contrasts between the various groups in the extent to which they viewed current induction provision as satisfactory. In general, advice workers in the voluntary sector were clear about the overall aims of their particular organisations and their own roles in achieving these aims. Inexperienced part-timers in the local authority sector, on the other hand, were much more

uncertain about what they were supposed to be doing and had little understanding of the objectives of community development. As in the case of youth workers and adult educators, who had backgrounds in teaching or social work, or had been involved in another branch of community education, their employers frequently underestimated the amount of induction required and tended to assume they knew what to do. That this assumption was considered misplaced is clearly exemplified by the following comment by an experienced part-time worker:

> I was left to get on with it - probably because they had an idea of what I was capable of, that was *their* image not my own. What would have been much better would have been to sit down and discuss a practical programme of work - a set of clear objectives to start with.

Furthermore, he felt that the training needs of volunteers in community centres were neglected:

> Community Education have been too long in getting round to the idea that they should be offering training to people in any situation ... volunteers are often roped in and left without any training.

Basic Training

Our respondents identified several areas of need as essential features of basic training. These areas have been divided into four main categories (see Table 2.5) in order to differentiate the many kinds of content suggested by our sample.

Table 2.5: Basic training: suggested content

Provision of Experience:	support from colleagues visiting similar units working alongside others
Instruction on Aspects of Organisation:	committee procedures* organising time programming administrative procedures particularly book-keeping*
Provision of Information:	access to records eg previous minutes, archives employment law* funding bodies health and safety welfare rights
Opportunities to Develop Skills:	adult learning styles** campaigning community action committee work* communication counselling fund raising group work public speaking publicity

*voluntary committees
**special project workers

As we shall see in Chapter 3 opinions on the quality of basic training on offer differed and accessibility to training varied considerably. For the moment, however, our concern is with the particular needs identified.

The balance of time devoted to any aspect of training is clearly dependent on a range of factors including the features of the particular setting in which the worker is operating, the attributes of the worker and the time available for training. We were struck, however, by the lack of basic training provided for members of committees with weighty responsibilities and little or no relevant experience. For instance, treasurers of committees were frequently left to devise their own methods of book-keeping and were given no guidelines regarding safeguards such as limiting cash transactions or double signing cheques. As one respondent pointed out, this would put treasurers in a very vulnerable position if there were discrepancies in the accounts and could tempt some to borrow money which they were unable to pay back. The anxiety caused by the lack of training cannot be over-emphasised and is well demonstrated by the following paraphrased comment:

> I really had sleepless nights trying to work out the accounts but after handling the money, receipts and books for a while I picked up the methods that would have saved me a terrible amount of time and labour if I had been taught them at the start.

Our survey has demonstrated that there is a strong consensus on the training needs of inexperienced part-time staff among those interviewed, whether they be employer/trainer, part-time worker, voluntary sector or local government sector. Training needs do not end at a basic level, however, and when asked whether they may have further needs our respondents answered that they certainly had, and even here it was possible to detect patterns in demands for further training.

Beyond basic training

In this section we concentrate on training which goes beyond the basic. In our view, however, it would be wrong to regard this training as only for more experienced part-time workers. Some of the specified content in Table 2.6 for instance, would be appropriate to a new worker if he or she were working in a setting where a particular client group, such as the elderly, children or single parents, were dominant. As with the basic training courses the level of demand depended on factors such as skills gaps within a particular working situation, changing local conditions, new issues coming to the fore, and personal need or interest. We have identified three categories of training needs as demonstrated by Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Training needs beyond the basics

Refresher/Update:	new procedures* new housing legislation**
Specialist Skill:	assertiveness campaigning debt counselling* running a tenants' association/community council/centre*** working with the elderly/children
Specialist Knowledge:	budget control employment law*** tenants' rights welfare rights

* advice workers
** tenants'/residents' associations
*** management committees

Obviously, more of the further training needs listed above would be specific to particular working situations than is the case with induction or basic training.

As part-timers gain experience, they perceive needs particular to their own contexts or directions in which they wish to develop. In essence, our data suggests a core of induction and basic training, complemented by a range of optional supplementary training targeted at special requirements and regular updates on relevant issues.

Features of successful training

As we found in our research on youth work and adult education, there were certain features of training which seemed to encourage success almost regardless of actual course content. It must be borne in mind that we have no independent measures of whether training was successful or not but are merely reporting the perceptions of part-timers and their employers/trainers on what makes training effective. The key features are training which:

- includes opportunities to meet other part-time staff;
- can be applied directly to the part-timers' own situation (relevance);
- is 'delivered' by those with credibility ie those with recent experience of the reality of community development;
- caters for special requirements eg creche facilities;
- does not take up too much time.

Let us now consider each of these features a little more closely.

Opportunities to Meet Other Part-time Staff

Part-timers greatly valued opportunities to meet each other at organised courses, seminars or conferences, by visiting each others' work places or through shared resource centres. Meeting colleagues was a means of exchanging ideas, making contacts and building networks. Most importantly for those working in relative isolation, realising that others were experiencing similar problems helped to boost confidence and reduce anxiety about how well they were doing their job. One worker expressed intense relief at:

> Just knowing I wasn't the only one floundering;

after her first and only meeting with colleagues, but was disappointed that none of the issues raised at the meeting were followed up. We return to this point later.

Relevant Training

Part-timers, particularly volunteers, have many conflicting demands on their time. Training over and above their regular commitment clearly has to compete with other activities which the part-timer could be engaged in and if it misses the mark there is a substantial risk of part-timers being put off training for good:

> There's not enough training but ... it's got to be good training ... I've been to one or two bad ones as well ... The reason why I say it must be good is that it's hard enough to actually get volunteers to do training.

Experiential learning methods, which gave trainees the opportunity to practice or role play situations they might face, were regarded more highly than courses that emphasised theory. Acting out a role and receiving constructive criticism, could go long way towards boosting confidence and reducing anxiety:

> It would have been helpful to have a wee bit of knowledge and practice at going and knocking at someone's door for the first time. Not everybody can ... actually coming out with the words can be terrifying.

Theory, on the other hand, was considered to be of little value. As one worker with the elderly put it:

> We should get people working with the elderly to formulate a training programme rather than the theoretical people.

An employer who shared this view explained:

> I also find that a lot of people ... prefer the practical work rather than spend a whole day on housing benefit ... or income support - they get totally confused. Whereas if they actually see the problem in front of them ... they get on a lot better.

Credibility of the Trainer

Training events regarded as most successful were those delivered by practitioners or those with direct experience of the kinds of situations the part-timers found themselves in. While community development workers were less emphatic about this than adult education and youth workers, they nevertheless placed learning from an experienced worker high on their list of training preferences. One of the voluntary advice agencies has a policy of using volunteers as trainers. In the view of one of the trainers interviewed this reduced the possibility of barriers being created between the recruits and the 'experts' training and raised the formers' confidence by enabling them to identify with their trainers:

> We are doing the same job as the people we are training ... we are gaining experience and passing it on to the same kind of people.

Lack of knowledge about aspects of the areas in which part-timers worked not only diminished confidence in the trainers' credibility but could also jeopardise the success of the course. Thus a course for managers of voluntary organisations held at a local college was criticised because:

> sometimes (the trainers) were very much in the dark and therefore not very helpful.

While not wishing to digress into a discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of using practitioners as trainers, it is worth noting that such an approach fulfils a major aim of community development, which is to encourage and enable local people to take greater control of the organisations which serve their community.

Family Commitments

Many of our respondents had young children to care for and might be discouraged from attending training events because of their family responsibilities. To cater for their needs it is essential to provide creche facilities or child-minding expenses.

Time

As mentioned above, part-timers have many demands on their time. Voluntary community development workers tend to be active in several spheres and frequently have family commitments.

The following quote succinctly sums up the situation of many community development volunteers:

> My own family laugh at me, right enough, they call me 'Mrs Never-in'.

Part-timers in general expressed a preference for training to be compressed into as short a time as possible:

> People who are involved haven't got time to go to training sessions ... maybe a day if it could be condensed into that ... or an evening course.

Training which makes too many inroads beyond current commitments can fail to reach the target group and be resented. Several respondents within our sample had not taken advantage of available training because of conflicting commitments. This problem is compounded in rural areas where travelling time to a training event may be considerable. Ways of overcoming this included:

- on-the-job training;
- training within working hours;
- the trainer travelling to the locality;
- residential weekends;
- paid training.

Despite the comments about time constraints, the one group who had experienced residential weekends were enthusiastic about this form of training. We end this chapter by looking at our respondents preferred forms of training. These were on the job training, on the job support and evaluation, handbooks, weekends and day release. In addition there was some support for opportunities to visit other projects.

Preferred forms of training

On-the-Job Training

Workers in all aspects of community development favoured learning through sitting in at meetings, reading files and minutes and observing experienced colleagues at work. While there may be merit in having access to resources such as these, they also recognised that a structured programme of

learning would greatly enhance the training experience. Learning could then be consolidated through analysing each session together with the experienced co-worker, supervisor or at training events. When asked how they would train a new worker, the majority of our respondents proposed a programme along the lines of an apprenticeship. Two even suggested working full-time over a period of about a week in order to become familiar with all aspects of the workplace. This would give them a sense of belonging while enabling them to learn through practical experience in a supportive situation.

Day Release

Paid workers new to community development, who were expected to undertake formal training expressed a preference for doing so on a day release basis rather than concentrated periods of a week or more. (One employer even suggested that half-days would be preferable). In this way they would be able to assimilate manageable amounts of knowledge gradually, while having the opportunity to use it in real situations. Issues and problems that arose at work could then be discussed on training days and be used in problem solving exercises. Using real situations would be more meaningful and raise trainees' confidence by enabling them to contribute more actively to the training programme.

Residential Weekends

Only one group, community centre staff in the rural area, had used this form of training with the intention of bringing together individuals in an area where travel was difficult and giving them the opportunity to concentrate on their training without the distractions of other commitments. Particular benefits identified included the short length of time it took the group to gel and the informal exchanges which took place outwith formal training.

On-the-Job Support and Evaluation

The need for regular support, above all from full-time staff, was expressed by all part-timers. The nature of the support they were seeking varied, as did the amount of support they received. As we found in youth work and adult education, the voluntary sector organisations were more likely to be conscious of this need and to develop support networks, than the local authority sector. Some voluntary committee meetings, for example, were always attended by community education staff, or by staff from housing and social work departments. In contrast, special project workers were frequently left entirely to their own devices. Reasons for lack of support varied and included:

- other commitments, so regular support is not given a high priority;
- staff shortages;
- belief that part-time staff should not be dependent on full-time staff.

It is worth elaborating the last point given that the whole purpose of community development is to empower individuals or groups and increase their independence. It also has implications for the training of full-time staff. The critical point between too much help and too little is a fine one and full-time workers need to maintain a careful balance between the two. Full-time workers who are

too supportive can have a disabling effect on groups. For instance, one management committee in a case-study area, while actively pursuing a number of projects, were happy to rely heavily on a full-time worker and took no advantage of training opportunities which would help them to become more independent and introduce them to similar groups. A member of a community council, on the other hand, was less happy with this kind of approach:

> To me community education doesn't let go ... they aren't doing it right in (not) educating the people to keep books and things like that.

Another committee, was galvanised by the arrival of a new full-time worker:

> A wizard, a wee dynamo ... they would have sat back and scratched if it hadn't been for her drive in putting their names forward and getting them in and getting them on courses.

This also applies to special project workers. An advice worker, who had been constantly supported when she started work, gained immense confidence at being able to cope on her own several months later. By contrast, a group worker had mixed feelings about the benefits of working alongside a full-time worker:

> She was actually a great help ... and with her being there every week she was there to speak to when problems came up ... but I felt sometimes that it didn't give me the opportunity to develop my own abilities ... sometimes I felt, well, who is running the group?

While part-timers need regular support, then, they also need to be given leeway to develop their own skills and confidence in their abilities. This is neatly summed up by the following comment from a worker who felt well supported by her employer:

> He listened; he didn't throw advice at me when I didn't want it, he seemed to sense when I needed advice and when I just wanted to talk about something.

When available, support from full-time staff was greatly appreciated. The main kinds of support which was valued included:

- regular (at least once a fortnight) meetings to discuss work;
- purposeful and constructive evaluation of the part-timer in action;
- sources of information - (resource centres, manuals, information on benefits or grant giving bodies etc);
- structured staff development and training programmes for part-time staff.

As we found in youth work, this area of support from full-time staff was one which transcended sector boundaries. Staff in the voluntary sector, for example, appreciated contact with full-time

community education workers in the local authority sector. In some areas this was very much a two way process with local authority workers calling on the expertise of voluntary organisations such as welfare rights groups.

The importance of contact with other part-timers is worth stressing. In several situations experienced part-timers were considered more than adequate substitutes for full-time staff, but in others, opportunities to meet immediate employers were more desirable. While knowing that an employer/supervisor could be easily contacted was reassuring, a regular time set aside for supervision meetings were regarded as more beneficial:

> I know I can pick up a phone and say 'help' if necessary ... if you had a ... definite meeting you'd feel better about discussing any problems.

Our findings on this aspect are confirmed by our research in youth work: part-timers in the voluntary sector felt better supported by employers than those in the local authority sector. Working in small teams with a common purpose contributed greatly to feeling mutually supported. This was reinforced by regular meetings, social events, resource bases or offices where staff could meet, a forum for workers with the elderly and the policy of giving everyone a say in the running of the organisation.

To sum up, there appear to be differences in the amount of support provided in the two sectors. There is not the same degree of recognition of the need for support for special project workers in particular. Although the full-timers' ability to provide support might be hampered by staff shortages, other work commitments and too broad a remit, such support needs to assume a higher priority. Most conspicuous by its absence was the feeling of belonging to a team, as described above, with a common purpose and goals beyond the immediate task in hand and a lack of awareness of the aims of community development. Regular on-the-job support can contribute greatly towards team building and can be seen as an efficient and effective approach to training.

Visiting Other Projects

Visiting other similar groups or projects served a number of training objectives: it enabled staff to see different resources, exchange ideas, make useful contacts and learn of different ways of approaching common problems. The benefits to a relatively new project were described by the part-time paid worker supporting a community flat project:

> They came back and said "... well most of these people run committees" they had picked that up from two Family Flats ... one had a flat management committee and a playgroup committee ... they had picked up a lot of different issues but that was the idea ... you are planting seeds for a time and letting them think about it.

One of the training programmes for community project workers included spending a day or more at a number of different projects in order to give workers experience of the range of community work and help them to identify potential avenues for the development of their careers.

Handbooks

Staff handbooks or manuals describing organisational aims, administrative procedures, health and safety regulations and containing other relevant basic information were not generally available. Staff from the two groups which did provide them found them helpful particularly at the outset of their employment. Fact sheets and an in-house newsletter were also seen as a practical way of keeping staff informed.

Members of management committees suggested that a manual containing an outline of committee procedures, basic book-keeping, names and addresses of useful contacts and grant giving bodies would make their jobs much easier.

Paid Training

Part-time staff employed through the community programme undertook training during their working hours. Special project workers, directly employed by community education, like their colleagues in adult education, are not paid to do training or attend meetings even when they are obliged to under the terms of their employment. As a result many are reluctant to take advantage of opportunities and their employers are reluctant to put pressure on them to do so, as the following comment suggests:

> Sometimes it's difficult to get part-timers to take courses which take a lot of time. They are only paid to work X hours a week and I think it is difficult to ask them to do training courses for which they are not paid.

While not being paid to attend training events volunteers were offered travelling and child-minding expenses or creches. In addition, one of the voluntary organisations allocated special funds to include a social aspect to training days by providing food and drink for participants.

Summary

In this chapter we have described training needs, the features seen as promoting successful training and preferred forms of training provision.

We have indicated three levels of content for training, namely:

- induction;
- basic training;
- additional training.

We have suggested that there are strong patterns of commonality for induction and basic training, and greater diversity in additional training needs. As far as additional training is concerned there is a demand for refresher or updating courses as well as advanced specialist courses.

The features of successful training are:

- opportunities to meet other part-time staff;
- relevance and direct applicability of content;

- credibility of the trainer;
- reasonable time commitment.

As far as preferred forms of training were concerned there was enthusiastic support for:

- on-the-job training;
- day release;
- residential weekends;
- paid training;
- visiting other projects;

and some support for a handbook or a staff manual.

We have shown the diverse background and experience of part-time workers. This clearly makes training difficult to target and deliver in a way that suits everyone. Chapter 3 concerns an overview of the training currently on offer and perceptions of its value.

3

Perceptions of national training provision

This chapter is concerned with perceptions of national training provision. We begin by looking at the range of courses provided across the country. This is followed by a consideration of the quality of training at a local level. Finally, we discuss our respondents' views on modular training.

The national picture

In addition to our work in the three case-study areas described in Chapter 1, we undertook a more comprehensive survey of training provision for part-time staff. This survey was conducted by a postal questionnaire.

It was difficult to identify all the providers of training as no readily accessible data base exists. The following steps were taken in an attempt to ensure as wide a response to our questionnaire as possible.

- All Principal Community Education Officers (PCEO) in Region and Island Authorities were contacted.

- Where community education or their equivalent departments indicated they did not have sole responsibility for training other departments were contacted. These included Leisure and Recreation and Social Work Departments.

- The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations was approached to identify Councils of Social/Voluntary Service. Each Council was contacted.

We asked these institutions and departments to provide us with information on:

- the number and title of courses offered to part-time community development workers;
- the objectives of the course;
- the numbers participating;
- the length of the course and the distribution of course hours (eg one day, six hours over three evenings);
- the name of the trainer and of the training co-ordinator;
- the categories of voluntary and part-time staff receiving no training and the reasons for this;
- how training was structured generally within the organisation.

Information was supplied from most of the Regional, Island and Divisional authorities except Tayside, Orkney and Shetland which provided no returns from departments responsible for community development. Only one voluntary sector organisation responded.

In addition, reliable statistical information was not always readily accessible. Information on training provision was generally held by local area teams, not centrally. The one region that did hold information centrally did not include details on the form of take-up but only on content. While there are undoubtedly good reasons for devolving responsibility for training to local area workers, we would suggest that holding such information at Regional/Divisional level could greatly facilitate strategic planning and ensure that the same quality and provision of training is widely available.

Several gaps in our survey were created by respondents misunderstanding our requirements. Some senior staff in Lothian, for example, thought that we were seeking information only on youth work and did not include adult education and community development courses in their returns. Tayside left out information on training courses provided by local authorities for staff on urban aid funded projects and community programmes, managed by voluntary committees, on the assumption that we were only interested in training provision for their own staff. In addition, we received no returns from the Social Work Department in Glasgow which is the main provider of training in community development.

For the reasons outlined above, we cannot claim to present a comprehensive survey but can offer only an incomplete picture of courses available to volunteer and part-time workers in between April 1987 and March 1988. However, even within these limitations similar patterns in training provision throughout Scotland did emerge. Because of the low response rate from the voluntary sector and because the boundaries between the sectors are frequently blurred we report on their training provision together.

Training provision

Table 3.1 shows the numbers of courses provided and illustrates the kinds of topics covered in these courses. As contextual information we also provide estimates of the population statistics for each Region/Division as supplied by the General Register Office for Scotland for June 1988.

Table 3.1: Numbers of courses provided for part-time community development workers April 1987 - March 1988

	No of Courses	Examples of Content	Estimated Population (to nearest 1,000)
Local Authority Sector			
Borders	4	community education induction*; group work*; counselling*.	103,000
Central	1	group decision making.	272,000
Dumfries & Galloway	2	committee procedures.	147,000
Fife	5	communications; counselling; consultancy; group work skills; playscheme organisation; publicity and public relations.	344,000
Grampian	18	working with under-fives; tenants' groups; parenting skills; committee work skills; centre staff policy development.	501,000
Highland	4	committee procedures; video*; reminiscence work.	202,000
Lothian	2	committee work skills; child development/play.	741,000
Strathclyde			2,317,000
Ayr	24	committee work skills; office bearer skills; book-keeping; managing a credit union; Scottish Homes Act; community newspaper; community programme in-service; arts & crafts*; working with under-fives; programming; accounts; games; first aid.	
Dumbarton	5	working with under-fives: games; indoor sport; arts & crafts; planning; volunteer induction*.	
Glasgow	9	playschemes; activist training; centre management; employment legislation; forum operation; committee procedures; drugs*; group leadership*.	
Lanark	8	playschemes; committee procedures; video*; art work*; welfare rights.	
Renfrew	23*	introductory/basic community education and basic leadership courses; resources; drugs; counselling; audio-visual; reprographics; assertiveness for women.	
Tayside		no details on content of courses for community development workers provided	394,000
Western Isles	0		31,000
TOTAL	105		
Voluntary Sector			
Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary Services	4	group work; volunteer and organiser support; management skills, marketing. (also have an ongoing programme of induction, health and safety, job seeking and interview skills and use outside providers)	

* Courses aimed at all those working in a part-time paid or voluntary capacity in community education

We indicated at the beginning of the chapter that we would not wish to claim complete accuracy for the numbers of the courses offered. The return from the Borders, for example, pointed out that our questionnaire did not consider training on a one to one basis in the workplace and that this was often the more appropriate form of training in rural areas. Similarly in Lothian, many part-time workers attend courses offered by the South East Scotland Training Association (SESTA) but statistics on take-up were not available. Our case-study respondents also referred to courses in their area which were not included in the survey returns for their regions. These would include courses for residents' or tenants' associations and other voluntary committees which work closely with local authority staff.

The returns from areas where no training in any branch of community education had taken place usually identified lack of resources, human and financial as the main reason:

> We have neither the manpower nor the financial resources with which to train people.
>
> (Western Isles)

Form, Content and Take-up of Training

Training was provided in a variety of ways. These included evening courses, for example, one two hour session per week over three to six weeks, half or full-day courses, residential weekends and non-residential weekends. Community programme volunteers undertook training in blocks of one to four weeks. Table 3.1 gives examples of the content covered by the training. Most of the training needs identified by the case-studies appear to be covered by the training offered. However, the availability of training in any part of Scotland varied considerably. As far as the local authority sector is concerned, our survey suggests that the amount and frequency of training depends on a number of factors:

- the priorities of the employers;
- the available budget;
- the uptake of courses;
- the availability of trainers;
- geographical situation;
- the qualifications of part-timers.

It is generally a combination of several of these factors, over which the community education service has little or no control, that limits training opportunities, particularly in regions with a widely dispersed population. Returns from some Regions/Divisions mentioned either that courses had to be cancelled due to lack of uptake, or that there were insufficient numbers of staff for courses to be viable or cost effective. Table 3.2 lists staff who had not been offered training in 1987-88 and the reasons given for this.

Table 3.2: Staff receiving no training and the reasons for this

	Category of staff	Reason for no training
Borders	Some management committee members	Insufficient staff. Limited range of national courses. Cost.
Dumfries & Galloway	Community development workers playscheme leaders	No training needs identified. No budget. Most had previously undergone training.
Fife	50% part-time paid workers Some voluntary workers	Lack of courses. Other commitments. Had previously undergone training.
Grampian (one division)	Preschool playgroup leaders	Lack of take-up.
Highland	None mentioned	
Lothian	Creche workers	Course arranged for next session.
Argyll & Bute	All staff	Industrial action.
Ayr (one area)	Community association office bearers	No training course. On the spot training takes place.
Dumbarton	Outreach workers	Lack of experience, time and resources. Intend to run courses 1988-1989.
Glasgow (some areas)	Creche workers	No suitable courses. Small number of staff.
Lanark	None mentioned	
Tayside	Family workers	On the job training given - no specific course available.
	Creche workers	Selected from women experienced in child care.

Taken together Tables 3.1 and 3.2 seem to suggest that training for community development workers is not a high priority in many areas. While the gaps in our survey returns, mentioned above, may account for the small number of courses listed, our case-study information does confirm the lack of formal training opportunities in this branch of community education. Reasons for this may be connected to the fact that community development is an ill-defined area which may be the

responsibility of different local authority departments. The emphasis appears to be on committee skills training, while creche and preschool group workers appear to be the categories most likely to miss out on training, where priorities have to be made.

Two areas, Renfrew and Ayr, stand out for the range and number of courses offered to all their staff. Table 3.3 shows that the reason given for such extensive provision is the existence of a high profile training team whose remit covers all branches of community education.

Table 3.3: Areas where all categories of staff were offered training and the reasons for this

Division		Reason given
Ayr	Across the Division all categories were offered training in each Community Service Area	One APCEO has a responsibility for training as part of remit. APCEO together with Area Officers comprise Divisional Training team
Renfrew	Training offered to all categories of staff at different levels. Many staff did not receive training ... they feel they have undertaken all the training necessary.	Each area team has a 'lead person' for training. These members of staff have undertaken an assessed course and along with APCEO form the Divisional Training Group.

On the whole, our data suggest that when training is offered there is a good response from the target group. Thus, if there is a target group of 25 it is typical to have 18 - 20 participants and where numbers are limited it is not unusual to have a full complement of trainees.

Who Provides Training?

A wide range of trainers was used and shared by both sectors but there was a marked preference for in-house training. Community programme staff would receive both on-the-job training and attend courses at local colleges of further education. Within the local authority sector, the predominance given to staff shortage as a reason for not providing training and the information received on training structures indicates a reliance on full-time community education staff not only as identifiers of needs and organisers of provision but also as 'deliverers' of training. Our case-studies provided information about shared resources and training between the sectors suggesting that, budgets permitting, there may be scope for developing training targeted at both sectors. Examples of the range of outside trainers used for community development workers are listed below in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Outside organisations used for training

Inverclyde Drugs Line
Jordanhill College of Education
Moray House College of Education
Motherwell College
Scottish Health Education Group
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
Scottish Pre-School Playgroup Association
South East Scotland Training Association
Scottish Association for Victim Support Schemes
Volunteer Development Scotland
Welfare Rights Officers

So far we have concentrated on the extent and take-up of training. We now turn to what part-time staff and their employers/trainers have to say about the quality of what was on offer.

Perceptions of the Quality of Training

It is important to recall that we have no independent indicators of the quality of training. We did not observe any training, for example, nor did we have access to any evaluation of training undertaken by providers. This section reports the views of those who had undergone training and is based on data from our three case-study areas.

As we described in Chapter 2, the need for induction and basic training was widely recognised among our respondents, several of whom had not been offered any such training. Part-time paid and voluntary staff from special projects funded directly by local authorities or through urban aid, were surprised at the lack of induction to prepare them for situations which could be stressful:

> I found it difficult to handle ... I would have benefited if there were something along the lines (of a basic training course) ... just a wee snippet of everything ... maybe on a one day in-service training.

Training opportunities for members of management committees were rare. Without any training, individuals felt unable to participate fully in the functions of the organisation and that they were merely there to provide a semblance of grassroots involvement. Full-time staff also recognised the need for training in committee work skills to raise the confidence of representatives of 'client' groups:

> The unemployed people at management committee meetings don't say very much. ... It's those of us in work (full-time staff) that make all the decisions for the unemployed which is a wee bit patronising ... They are going to have to make a contribution and obviously they need training to be able to do that.

Views on the adequacy and appropriateness of training provision were mixed, ranging from 'helpful' and 'fun' to 'boring' and 'irrelevant'. Courses which were not specifically focused on issues of local interest were considered least successful. Others were criticised for their training methods and presentation:

> One trainer was very dictatorial - it was like being back at school and you had a teacher you didn't like.

There was a marked preference for courses which emphasised practical activities rather than 'chalk and talk':

> Some classes were run on the proper way to conduct committees and that was very helpful ... how to speak in public, how to take minutes. It did help me quite a lot because I used to write page after page of minutes.

Of vital importance is the trainers' sensitivity to the trainees' pace and level of understanding. As the following comments demonstrate, a training event can miss the mark if pitched at the wrong level even when it has been provided in response to expressed demands. The first comment is a reaction to a session on welfare rights provided for the management committee of a community centre:

> It really was far too advanced for someone coming in off the street. It was really bamboozling at times.

The second concerns the visit of a field officer of an umbrella organisation to help a voluntary committee to formulate its constitution:

> The group didn't understand and (the field officer) didn't understand how local people ticked and (that they) didn't want ... wordings and ... jargon.

Many trainers stressed that training events should be fun, both as a pleasant means of conveying the training message and also to make training events more attractive to staff. To their credit they did appear to achieve this aim and succeed in using humour to lighten potentially tedious or emotionally upsetting aspects of community development work. Most of the employer/trainers would agree with the following quote:

> I think fun is very important ... if you have it too strict people don't take things in ... if you laugh in a situation you always remember it.

There was a higher level of satisfaction on training provision among voluntary advice workers and community project employees than among mainstream local authority workers. The former tended to have clearly defined training structures with built in procedures for monitoring, evaluating

and following-up courses. They also enjoyed more support in the form of access to experienced workers or employers and worked alongside one or more colleagues.

Paid part-timers in the local authority sector were least satisfied with the training they had received. Their training needs tended to be neglected by their employers partly because they were recruited on the basis of their experience and qualifications in related fields and also because they were on short-term contracts. Training events or staff meetings which did not take up suggestions of follow up activities led to great disappointment and dissatisfaction reinforcing feelings of isolation and insecurity created by the terms of employment. For example, the following comment describes the frustration felt by a part-timer after the first and only meeting with other staff on similar projects:

> I think if there had been some results where we could all actually have got together ... we did discuss the same sort of problems which we were all experiencing, ... (and) have a chance to sympathise with each other but that was really as far as it went.

Likewise community programme workers who were encouraged to send in written requests for additional training felt disappointed when they received no reply. Another part-timer compared her experience as a community development worker unfavourably with her experience as an Adult Basic Education tutor. She was fortunate in that she was able to rely on the ABE network to which she belonged to support her in her community development position.

To sum up, when available, the benefits of basic training were widely recognised. Positive aspects of training were the way in which it increased confidence, improved and added to skills, and reduced anxiety. Courses delivered by trainers who were knowledgeable about local issues and able to communicate at the trainees' level were particularly appreciated. Within the local authority sector, the main criticisms concerned the limited number of training opportunities, lack of follow-up, and the structure and content of some events. Within the voluntary sector, greatest satisfaction was expressed by the welfare rights workers. Smaller voluntary associations, such as playgroups or tenants' associations, were less content with training offered by development officers from umbrella organisations, the costs of which could be prohibitively high, and tended to rely on local authority provision.

Summary of Perceptions of Training

It is impossible to generalise about perceptions of quality of advanced or specialist courses as our respondents' experience of this was so limited. However, it is worth emphasising two points. Firstly, it was generally agreed that there was a need for regular updating of courses particularly in organisations affected by changes in legislation, but also to introduce new and stimulating ideas for community development activities. Here again, there was a preference for trainers with recent experience of operating in areas which were the focus of training or were long-term members of staff. Secondly, it is necessary for training to build in evaluation of courses and follow-up. In this way all staff are involved in the development and improvement of training programmes, a process which can contribute to their personal development in terms of increasing confidence in their abilities, as well as to the cohesion of the organisation.

This brief glance at training provision and take-up in both the local authority and voluntary sectors indicates that a wide range of training is provided in terms of both content and structure. Access of an individual part-time worker to training is dependent on a number of factors including the availability of trainers, the size of the training budget and geography. The next section reports the views of part-time workers and their employers/trainers on the prospect of a modular approach to training.

Perceptions of modular training

The case-study data provides the basis of this section. Our interviewees were asked for comments on a modular approach to training. In particular, we were interested in their views on modules being certified by SCOTVEC.

Before going any further, we should point out that modular training was a new concept to many of the staff interviewed and misunderstood by several of those who had come across it. This meant that a description of a modular approach had to be supplied. The description included the following elements:

- a package of learning over a period of 20 to 40 hours;
- a package which specified at the start what the student would have learned by the end of the module;
- the prospect of national certification;
- the potential of linking one module to other modules.

It is important to remember that most of our respondents were reacting to the **idea** of modules as outlined above, rather than the **experience** of modules. Very few had taught modules or been a student on a modular programme. They were, therefore, largely unaware of the degree of flexibility in 'fleshing out' modules, adapting modules to local circumstances or flexibility in teaching and learning approaches. The many misconceptions, unfounded assumptions and prejudices uncovered by our research, suggests a need for clear information about modules being targeted to community education if a modular approach to training is to be adopted.

Community development workers shared the attitudes of adult education and youth workers to modular training to a large extent. Like their colleagues in other branches of community education, the majority would support the introduction of modular training and welcomed the prospect of national certification but expressed some reservations. Part-time staff were concerned about delivery and about the amount of time required to complete the modules. The strongest reservations were expressed by employers who feared that modules might be too rigid to be locally relevant, too difficult for some trainees or not sufficiently challenging for others. However, as Table 3.5 demonstrates, attitudes to the use of modules were quite positive.

Table 3.5: Attitudes to modular training

	Part-time Staff			Employers/Trainers		
	For	Against	Other	For	Against	Other
Local authority sector						
Inner City	2			1		
Rural Area	1			1		
Mixed	3	1	1*			3**
Voluntary sector						
Inner City	5			2		1*
Rural Area	2*					1 unsure
Mixed Area	5			3		1**
TOTALS	18	1	1	7		6

* qualified support
** strong reservations

Those who were in favour of a modular approach gave reasons which could be divided into three main categories, **enhancing and systematising training, opening up employment prospects** and **increasing the availability of training**. Table 3.6 gives examples of these categories.

Table 3.6: Reasons for supporting modular training

Enhancing and systematising training
- would develop standardised training
- would fill gaps in training
- would provide continuity of training

Opening up employment prospects
- would provide nationally recognised qualifications
- would validate skills
- would provide an avenue to full-time training and qualification
- may 'open up' further employment in education to part-time staff

Increasing the availability of training
- courses would be available regardless of the availability of staff
- would provide a package to 'take off the shelf'
- could be adapted to local needs
- could be delivered in situ
- would provide open access to skills

As this table shows, expectations of the range of benefits modules could provide are rather unrealistic. There also seem to be some misconceptions regarding the content of modules probably arising from the assumption that modules are learning packages filled with model materials and from a lack of understanding of what 'fleshing out' entails. Whether modules would lead to full-time training or improved employment prospects is open to question. Nevertheless, there seems to be a latent demand for formal validation of skills acquired and for an opening up of employment prospects in community development.

Conditions upon which support for modules depended included stipulations that local community education trainers would be involved in their design and delivery, that they would include practical activities and that they would not become prerequisites for employment.

As mentioned above, most doubts about a modular approach came from employers/trainers. Doubts can be categorised under the following three headings **lack of relevance, inappropriateness for community education ethos**, and **loss of contact between full-time and part-time staff**. Table 3.7 gives examples of these categories.

Table 3.7 Doubts about a modular approach

Lack of relevance
• lack local relevance
• lack personal relevance
• be regarded as a 'second rate' qualification
• become out of date
• too rigid
Inappropriateness for community education ethos
• create opportunities for failure
• fear of compulsory training
• become a prerequisite for payment of staff
• would lead to loss of part-time staff
• professionalisation of voluntary work
Loss of contact between full-time and part-time staff
• delivered by further education staff
• threat to local training
• delivered in a college rather than on the job

Some concern about costs, both in terms of staff time and budgets, was also expressed. Overall, however, the doubts listed in Table 3.7 seem to arise from misconceptions about and a lack of understanding of the nature of modular training, particularly in terms of adaptability to personal and local circumstances. While we realise that there is a debate about the appropriateness of modules as a way of providing training, we feel that there is a need to raise awareness about modules within the local authority and voluntary sectors if it is to be an informed debate.

Summary

This chapter has considered the extent, form and take-up of training of part-time community development workers in Scotland. We have illustrated the range of courses, the good response rate to training opportunities and the different content areas covered. We have drawn attention to factors affecting the availability of training to any individual part-timer by giving examples of staff receiving no training in various parts of the country. We have also highlighted the problems of obtaining statistically reliable information on training provision and uptake, information which we would consider important for strategic planning. Finally, we have reported the conflicting views about modules, stressing that doubts come mainly from full-time staff and shown that more information is needed by full-time and part-time staff.

4

Summary and conclusion

In this chapter we try to sum up our findings about training needs and provision and to discuss their implications for training policy for part-time staff. In providing a summary we take each of the aspects of the research described in Chapter 1 in turn.

What kind of roles do part-time community development workers play?

Many different roles were identified depending on the particular contexts in which part-time staff found themselves. Because committee work dominates community development activities, there was great emphasis on organisation and administration across and within the sectors. Advice workers stressed advising and counselling, while special project and support workers saw themselves as facilitators, although the definition of this term varied according to the context in which it was used.

What kinds of training are necessary to support staff in these roles?

Part-time staff come from a wide variety of backgrounds and are likely to have very different kinds of training needs. Although a number had worked in other branches of community education, we were forcefully reminded that it was a mistake to assume that they, or staff with teaching or social work qualifications did not need training. There are likely to be different profiles of training needs for individual workers and we discuss the implications of this for a modular approach to training below. Our research suggests four broad categories of training needs for all part-time community development workers:

- induction, which we define as an introduction to the setting in which one is operating;
- basic training, which we define as the development of key basic skills necessary to perform the job of part-time community development worker;
- refresher courses for experienced workers;
- specialist courses such as counselling, assertiveness, welfare rights.

How satisfactory is existing training and what are the factors contributing to satisfactory training?

Training was perceived as successful when it:

- included opportunities to meet other part-time staff;
- was relevant (in terms of content) to the situation in which staff were working);
- included practical activities;
- was not too time consuming;
- was delivered by those with recent experience of community development work.

There was a clear need for on-the-job training and regular support from more experienced workers as well as 'training courses'.

Chapter 3 described the range of training courses on offer between April 1987 and March 1988. However, that chapter also drew attention to the influence of such factors as the availability of full-time staff and budgetary constraints in determining whether part-time staff had access to training. Detailed research into the organisation and management of training in Scotland was not possible. It is noteworthy, however, that where area teams have a designated 'lead person' as in Renfrew, training was offered to all categories of staff.

How is modular training perceived?

Very few staff had experienced modular training either as trainers or trainees and so were responding to the **idea** of a modular approach. There was considerable support for a modular approach from part-time staff who saw such an approach as:

- enhancing and systematising training;
- opening up employment prospects;
- increasing the availability of training.

Most doubts about a modular approach were voiced by full-time staff, these we have categorised as employer/trainer. Their doubts were in terms of:

- lack of relevance;
- inappropriateness for community education ethos;
- loss of contact between full-time and part-time staff.

There seems to be a widespread lack of information about modules among community education workers. If training is developed using a modular approach, information and marketing are priorities.

Key points for future training developments

In this final section we identify what seems to us to be the major points that need to be considered when developing training for part-time community development workers. These are points arising from the research and so they do not address political and financial questions which necessarily underpin any development activity.

- There needs to be a clearer focus on the purposes of the different strands of community development work. Without explicity defined aims and objectives it is difficult to identify training needs accurately. We are not in a position to advocate the setting of national and regional objectives for community development, given our small sample size. However, our case-study data has demonstrated the value of area teams specifying their objectives and evaluating whether their training is geared to meeting these. We were struck by the differences between welfare rights organisations, special projects and some voluntary committees in this respect. In the welfare rights organisations objectives are clearly set and training targeted, as is the case in voluntary youth organisations and Adult

Basic Education discussed in our companion reports. Specifying objectives would provide a framework for training and would contribute towards the public accountability of the system.

- There is a need for a regular informal support and evaluation, provided on the job, by more experienced colleagues. Our case-study work and the responses to our national survey strongly suggested that training should be conceived as one-to-one on the job, as well as more formal training courses.

- Training has to be practical and relevant to be perceived as successful. It is important to remember that most part-time workers have other demands on their time and many are volunteers. They may give a lot of their time for preparation work or meetings and poorly targeted courses would be resented. Training that involved practical tasks and was participative was particularly favoured while the value of theory was not recognised. Training events could lead to disappointment if disorganised, unstructured or pitched at the wrong level.

- The issue of payment for training must be addressed. If training is viewed as an essential part of staff development strategy and team building, part-time paid staff should qualify for paid training as do their full-time colleagues. Additionally, as many of the staff are mothers, creches should be made available or child-minding expenses should be reimbursed.

- Training has to be delivered by people with credibility in the field. Opportunities to learn from more experienced colleagues were highly valued.

- Working alongside experienced colleagues helps on the job training, the identification of training needs and reduces feelings of isolation but can encourage dependency.

- There is an overall consensus on basic training across the local authority and voluntary sectors. There is a diversity in training needs beyond the basics. This suggests scope for inter-agency training at both levels.

- There seems to be a lack of readily accessible information about training provision and take-up in the local authority sector. We would have thought such information necessary for strategic planning.

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